

Testimony of Julie Rodriguez
SB 636, An Act Concerning Affirmative Consent
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
February 26, 2015

Good afternoon Chairs Bartolomeo and Willis, and members of the committee for Higher Education and Employment Advancement. My name is Julie Rodriguez. I am a student at Eastern Connecticut State University, as well as an intern for the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services. I would like to thank you for your consideration today in adopting affirmative consent as the standard in sexual misconduct cases on college campuses.

Affirmative consent is just one of many strides that legislation is making to assure that victim's rights are being protected, their voices are being heard, and the continuous blame that has been placed on victims is shifted toward the perpetrators. On my campus, we have implemented bystander training for students. This allows the students to begin the change in viewing sexual assault as a societal issue, where victims are no longer to blame and women on campus must be willing participants. The Affirmative Consent Bill is another tool that can be implemented to continue the work on stopping sexual violence on college campuses.

Working previously as an advocate, as well as talking with other survivors of sexual assault, many discuss how although they did not say no verbally during the assault, their entire being was saying no. Affirmative consent helps with clarification in sexual assaults. Many of the victims are afraid of perpetrators because sexual assault is an act of violence and power. A response that is consensual should be with positive body behavior and expressions, non-verbal included. A clear consent on the grounds of these

higher educational institutions will provide a positive move toward victim's protection.

Affirmative consent is just one step closer toward creating an environment that allows college student who are victims to become a survivor, for a perpetrator to be held accountable, and to move away from re-victimization.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.